"I'm sick of people knocking the Osmonds. I love them: really they're like an American version of the early Beatles."

AS PART of one of the greatest groups there has ever been, or as the motivating force behind a relatively new outfit, Paul McCartney has always had a vast amount of charisma—as well as talent.

To those who would quarrel with that, all I can say is, how many other artists do you know who could get a collection of stars on the cover of their new album that makes Hollywood films at their height look like home movies?

Interview by ROSEMARY HORIDE

But "Band On The Run" has on its cover one of two luminaries such as James Coburn, Christopher Lee, Michael Parkinson, Clement Freud, Kenny Lynch and just for good measure John Conteh (the boxer)—all dressed as convicts.

How did he do it?

"I just rang 'em up and asked 'em," said the man himself, grinning up at me from behind one of the desks in our office.

"We had an idea of what we wanted, then drew up a list of names and to our delight they all said they'd do it. John's on there 'cos he's a fellow Liverpudlian—we chose all the people because they looked the part! And we thought it would be more interesting than just having unknown faces, give people something to look at."

The piece of black vinyl inside the cover has a lot to commend it too. The songs were written and recorded in a great variety of locations:

"Some Linda and I wrote together, some are mine alone, and there's one Denny and I wrote together. He'd got half a song, so I finished it off for him."

The majority of the songs were recorded in Lagos—by a much depleted Wings.

"Denny Seiwell left about an hour before the 'plane took off, so we just went aboard, had a few drinks and waited 'til we got to Nigeria. *Then* we thought 'What are we going to do?'

"So I played drums, Linda played piano and mellotron, Denny Laine added some extra guitar parts and between us we managed to make the sound a bit fuller!"

Now the album is over, Paul says: "There's no real need to have a new band at this second. We're going to have a holiday, then Christmas and think about that after.

"We will be looking for a drummer and a guitarist—but they'll have to be pretty good."

Interesting to note, in that context, that Jimmy McCulloch (ex-Blue, etc.) and Davy Lutton, of Ellis—a guitarist and a drummer—have just been recording in Paris with Paul. But he wouldn't be drawn on the subject of their becoming part of Wings Mark II—it's obvious no final decisions have been made as yet.

The sudden departure of two-fifths of the band wasn't the only snag the McCartneys hit while in Africa.

"For one thing we thought it would be warm and sunny out there. Instead we caught the end of the rainy season and there were tropical storms all the time. There were power cuts, too . . .

"What's more we went there intending to use some of the local musicians—thought we might have some African brass and drums and things. So we asked around.

"After a day or two this guy, Fela Ransome Kuti, came round and said, 'You're trying to steal the Black African's music.' We said, 'No we're not, we just want to use some of your guys.' But he got so heavy about it in the end we thought, 'Blow you then, we'll do it all ourselves.'

"So we did, and the only guy from Africa we used was someone we met in London, then discovered he came from Lagos. But that was purely coincidental!"

As always, critical opinion is sharply divided about this album: one journalist has described it as "the best thing any of the Beatles have done since 'Abbey Road'."

Paul disassociates himself from such generalisations. He says: "It's fine—we're happy with it. But I wouldn't say anything like that!"

In fact, the album was more of a fun thing to do: in line with a new McCartney philosophy of not taking himself too seriously.

"If you are the subject of too much adoration with people talking about you as if you're God you can end up believing it yourself. Then you're frightened to do or say anything in case it doesn't fit your image. I think that might have been what happened to Eric Clapton . . ."

So Paul, in the light of this attitude, wasn't too worried about those people who didn't like the TV spectacular he did, "James Paul McCartney." With some reservations, *he* was pleased with it.

There were a lot of things we'd have liked to put into it and couldn't, because it was sponsored in the States by a firm that makes nice family cars, so they wanted a nice, family film.

"For example, we wanted to do a drag sketch. Do you remember the bit at the end with the dancers? At that point I was going to come on stage dressed as Diana Ross, and Linda was going to be dressed as a man! They didn't think that was a very good idea . . .

"We did it because it was something we wanted to do, and it hadn't been done before. What's more a lot of people did like it—Elton John had it showing on his last plane trip! Although there was a choice he was watching our movie."

Rather than get screwed up about criticism, as he and his ex-colleagues did when "Magical Mystery Tour" was panned, Paul now accepts adverse criticism with resignation, and prefers to dwell on that which is favourable. After all, as he said, a lot of people did like the show. The Osmonds, for example:

"They were great, when we met them. You can tell all the girls, Donny is a dish—seriously, he's a great guy. And Jimmy is a real little trooper for his age.

"People say he's frightening for a kid that age. But if you're in a normal home and a little kid comes up and does a tap dance you don't think that's frightening, do you?

"He comes from a show business family, and he's a performer. We asked him if he was going to do *Long Haired Lover From Liverpool*, and he said, 'Sure Paul you bet!' He's a professional already.

"Anyway, I'm sick of people knocking the Osmonds. I love them for their whole teenybop thing: really they're like an American version of the early Beatles.

"I think they're great. We found out they were in the floor above us in the hotel in Paris, so we had to take the kids up to see them. And they said, 'Hey, we really liked your special.'

"I definitely think it can all be too precious—if we took too much notice of the bad things people said we'd never do anything ever again."

In the past, critics have given the McCartneys a hard time. The Press especially were less than kind when Wings first started.

"When the Beatles' split I just bombed off to Scotland. I'd had more than enough of everyone, and I really didn't see why I had to talk to the Press. I didn't feel there was anything I wanted to say . . .

"I think that all started to build up—people thought, "What's he up to?" With that, and the fact that things weren't very good from the beginning (how can you be, from the word go?), it's not surprising they flocked us.

"But the British tour was incredible. By then the band was going great."

It's a shame that a band which was finally fulfilling some of its potential should suddenly disintegrate. But Paul doesn't seem disillusioned—he obviously realises that musicians all over the world would be delighted to fill the gaps in Wings.

In the meantime, the project he's entertaining himself with is a film.

"Yeah, we filmed the last four concerts of the European tour, and we're currently working on making them into a film. But it's not just us performing . . . the story is that there's a family of animated mice living under the stage we're working on!"

That will be the first venture for the McCartneys outside music, since they formed their own company outside Apple. Yet again, it's not something that's being taken too seriously. McCartney has the valuable gift of being able to laugh gently at himself these days.

PAUL, LINDA and baby STELLA in serious mood

SIDE BY SIDE

Paul and Linda McCartney do a double act in DISC'S office

And although he's still a highly talented musician and writer, he finds time to play happily with youngest daughter Stella, who was running round the office while we talked. A happy family man.

Soon Paul says he will be back, with his new band, on the road where he's happiest. He seems to have found a settled level at last—I defy anyone to listen to "Band On The Run" and they say he's finished or even losing his knack. Paul McCartney won't be finished until he's dead—and even then his music will live on.

LINDA McCARTNEY, fortunately, is a strong woman. Because, enviable though her position is, not many people could have taken it on and coped as successfully as she has.

Looking back now, to March 12, 1969, Linda says she never realised quite what she was taking on, and how much hatred could ensue.

"It wasn't as if I was a teeny, saying 'oh wow, I've married Paul McCartney,' I was independent, with a career. But suddenly people who didn't know the first thing about me, started writing things about me, about what sort of a person Paul had married; everybody was suddenly saying 'who is she?'

When we were in New York making 'Ram', twenty kids would follow us wherever we went. Everywhere—**hotel, restaurant, studio. After a while, I asked them to lay off, and one of them turned and said 'well what the hell did you expect?' I hadn't expected that."**

Since then she's suffered a great many more slings and arrows; as a musician (how dare she take up piano in his band, they cried), as a song writer (she can't, they riposted) as a film star from the TV special, and any other excuses that cropped up.

But Linda, admirably, has soldiered on, stubbornly pursuing her rather bizzarre taste in clothes and hair style; brushing up her piano playing and her song writing.

"At the beginning people said 'oh good grief, she can't play the piano' and I wasn't good. But then I hadn't jumped up and down and said 'hey Paul, let me be in your band,' I was there because he'd asked me to join, and gradually I got into it and began to enjoy it.

"But I can remember crying my eyes out in a dressing room in Europe because I was so scared. Now I know you can get up there and have a good time.

"Technically, nobody has ever said, do this or do that, but I know chords now and I know the scale and so I can work things out and write songs from there.

"It's like my photography—nobody ever told me the technicalities of it—shutter speeds, all that kind of thing. I know instinctively in my head now, what works when, but I just learnt by actually getting out and taking the pictures.

Linda took the inside poster on the next album, and does most of her photography now with a Polaroid—"One of the cheap £12 ones." She would still like to do assignments, but since she married Paul people seemed to have stopped regarding her as a professional photographer and stopped asking. Two of the Hendrix poster pictures, and one of Warren Beatty are still being sold in a Disc poster ad most weeks.

"Warren told me I was the first photographer who had clicked at the right minute. It's very important that, you can so easily miss it."

Linda's song writing is going well. To date she has written three A-sides, including Seaside Woman **(on the album) the other two have still to see the light of day (they're called** Wide Prairie **and** Oriental Night Fish**). The latter is like a Shangri-Las number with lots of talk-over,** Wide Prairie **turned into an 11 minute number—a sort of Country and Western and jazz blend.**

At the moment Paul is banned from America because of his drugs bust. This is difficult for Linda who misses her family, and while she and the kids are quite free to go there, she doesn't really want to leave Paul behind. She's anti-Nixon because he doesn't have the interests of the people at heart.

Women's Lib on the whole, passes her by.

"I was always lucky, I got amazing jobs because I was a girl. I do think women should get equal pay for jobs, but I don't like the dykey bit that goes with the movement at the moment. I don't think the women's lib women are really representing the main body of ladies, rather like Nixon doesn't represent what the main body of the American people feel."

Contrary to what a lot of people might think, Linda doesn't have a house overflowing with nannies, cook, housekeeper, etc.

"I've never really thought to live rich. I didn't come from a poor home, but my Dad was poor and worked his way up through Harvard Law School and I think I learnt a lot from him, he's a very moral man. And my Mum is very down to earth. Paul and I just wanted a very close, simple family. The kids come everywhere with us, and Heather, who is 11, really loves the other two and she can watch them for me. On tour I always put them to bed and give them their dinner and then somebody watches them for me.

"I think you can be too doting, too involved— kids should be independent. I like the wild side of life, but you've got to have a nucleus of love and security.

"I'm a bit of a fatalist really—I play life by ear."

CAROLINE BOUCHER

"I hadn't said 'hey Paul, let me be in your band', I was there because he'd asked me."